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Peace and Commerce.

At the recent Mohonk Arbitration Conference much was said, and very justly said, of the influence of commerce in promoting peace. In its present state of development and organization international trade is one of the most potent and ceaseless of the agencies which are binding the nations together and gradually constructing a fabric of world-wide connections which is faster war more and more impossible.

This unifying commercial fabric does not by any means consist entirely of selfish material interests, strong as these are. It has many ethical threads in it. Trade brings men and peoples into intimate contact, into knowledge of one another. It reveals to them their essential human likenesses, their similar virtues and faults, as well as their differences of customs and institutions. It thus opens their eyes to their own prejudices and narrownesses, as well as to the good qualities of those with whom they deal. It creates appreciation and trust; it removes dislike and offishness. Much of this influence is unconscious, but it is none the less real, and possibly all the more powerful because it is unconscious.

But it must not be forgotten that in the order of historic development peace has been the basis of

commerce much more than commerce of peace. So long as war was the rule between nations, steady trade between them was impossible. Their commercial dealings were irregular and timid. International trade found its course everywhere blocked by suspicious guards and relentless toll-barriers, and almost wholly suppressed while campaigns and battles were on. It was never entirely killed out by hate and war; but it led an uncertain and meagre existence, and consumed its temporary gains to a large extent in paying the exactions laid upon it, in the suffering of sudden and heavy losses, and in the expense of arming itself for its own defense.

One of the first great pleas for international peace was made quite as much in the interest of commerce and the blessings which it brings as in behalf of morality and humanity. Emeric Crucé, who, so far as is known, made the first definite proposal of an international tribunal of arbitration (1623), set forth in vigorous terms the value of trade and commerce to the welfare of peoples, and showed how the cessation of quarreling and fighting would promote them. He deplored the mercantile wreckage and ruin attendant upon the incessant wars of his time, and longed that what he had to say on the subject might be heard and heeded by all the rulers and princes of the world, as it was undoubtedly deeply felt by the suffering masses everywhere.

It is one of the clearest facts of history that just in the measure that peace has prevailed has commerce between peoples sprung up and grown. Peace creates the conditions and frees from restraint the forces which create commerce. Peace allows the population of countries to grow naturally, and thus increases greatly their economic power.

The importance of these truths may be made more real by an analysis of two significant facts connected with the progress of the past century.

The population of the world at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as nearly as the best statisticians have been able to determine it, was about six hundred and fifty millions. The international commerce of the world at that time was about fifteen hundred million dollars, or about two dollars and one-third per capita of the population. The increase in population during the century was about eight hundred and fifty millions. If the average earning power of the individual for commerce had remained

the same at the close of the century as at its beginning, this increase of population would give an increase in the annual commerce of the world of no less than two thousand millions of dollars.

This growth of population was due to the decrease of wars and the conquest of disease. So that, from this point of view, we are justified in crediting to peace not much less than one-half of the economic value to the world of these extra eight hundred and fifty millions of people. Of course the earning power of the individual at the close of the century was much greater than at the beginning, and this increased earning power is due to the industrial and transportation inventions made possible by the increasing prevalence of peace. It has often been shown that the great inventions have nearly all been made by civilians, that is, by men of peace, and not by military men.

But from another point of view the case is more impressive still. The annual commerce of the world increased during the century, not the two thousand millions mentioned above, but more than eighteen thousand millions, or above twelve hundred per cent. It is now twenty thousand millions of dollars per year, or above thirteen dollars per capita of the world's population. This great expansion of commerce has taken place very largely within the last thirty years, during which there has been no war between the civilized powers except the recent brief Spanish-American War, which showed in its way what immense ruin to commerce a great war would now cause. This long period of peace, which has left commerce without fear of disturbance, has stimulated its growth and expansion in a marvelous manner, and accounts in the main for probably more than half of the enormous commercial transactions between the nations, which are now going rapidly beyond twenty thousand millions of dollars per annum.

No man of business, it would seem, can realize the significance of these stupendous facts without henceforth throwing the whole weight of his influence on the side of permanent peace. A war for a single year at the present time between the United States and Great Britain, the two leading commercial nations, would result in a commercial destruction of not less than four or five thousand millions of dollars, leaving out of view the direct cost of the war. Commerce demands peace in its own interests. Give it peace, and in these days when piracy is gone from the seas it will take care of itself, without the protection of armed cruisers. Will the men of commerce everywhere throughout the nation do their duty and let their voice be heard like the trumpet's note in behalf of peace — thrice blessed permanent peace? As Dr. Hale pleaded at the Mohonk Conference, their hour has come.

The Decision of the Supreme Court.

What relation has the recent decision of the Supreme Court to the cause of peace? Only from that point of view do we care here to comment much upon it. If the court has decided, as many able lawyers think is uncertain, that the Constitution does not apply of itself, without special legislation, to newly acquired territories, it is the most momentous decision ever made in the history of the country.

It is difficult for an untutored mind to see how a legislative body existing only under the Constitution can have any power to legislate in matters over which the Constitution has not actually extended its authority. If its authority does not extend by the very fact of their acquisition over the newly acquired territories, then no provision of it so extends, it would seem, and Congress in that case has no power of legislation whatever over them. This is the view taken by four out of nine of the justices, including the Chief Justice and two others of the very ablest members of the court.

This view means that the Constitution, extending of its own force over the annexed territories, commands Congress to proceed to enact legislation for them in harmony with its principles. The Constitution of course enacts no special legislation for the carrying out of its own provisions. That has to be done by Congress. This is probably the reason that so much confusion has arisen on the subject, from which the court itself does not seem to have wholly escaped. The opinion of the majority, or rather their opinions,—for each of them had a different reason for his view,—show that there was no very clear conception in their minds of the nature of the real question at issue. They seem to have confounded the application of the Constitution itself with that of special legislation under it.

There is little doubt that the majority opinion, which is henceforth, until reversed, the law of the land, has arisen out of the political exigencies and prevailing policies of the time. If this interpretation remains in force, the policy of colonial dependencies is henceforth a part of the national program. Congress must still legislate for the home United States according to the Constitution, but for the vassal territories, who are to have no original hand in determining the government under which they are to live, it may legislate as it pleases. It may give them one form of government or another. It may provide for their admission as territories or as states, or it may keep them in vassalage for all time. It may adopt any form of taxation it chooses, without any reference to uniformity. It may preserve slavery in the Sulu Islands as long as it likes, or any other barbarous institution.

Thus the nation as a whole has ceased to be a republic, and has become part republic and part empire,